

REMARKS

Claims 1-46 are now pending in the application. The amendments to the claims contained herein are of equivalent scope as originally filed and, thus, are not a narrowing amendment. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

Claim 1

The amendment to claim 1 is submitted to clarify the subject matter claimed.

Basis for the amendment can be found on Paragraphs [0052] and [0057] of US Publication No. 2004/0117394 A1, at least.

Claim 2

The amendment to claim 2 is submitted to clarify the subject matter claimed and to correct a typographical error.

Basis for the amendment can be found on Paragraph [0057] of US Publication No. 2004/0117394 A1, at least.

Claim 3

The amendment to claim 3 is submitted to clarify the subject matter claimed.

Basis for the amendment can be found on Paragraph [0057] of US Publication No. 2004/0117394 A1, at least.

Claim 4

The amendment to claim 4 is submitted to clarify the subject matter claimed.

Basis for the amendment can be found on Paragraph [0057] of US Publication No. 2004/0117394 A1, at least.

Claim 5

The amendment to claim 4 is submitted to clarify the subject matter claimed.

Claim 25

The amendment to claim 25 is submitted to clarify the subject matter claimed.

Basis for the amendment can be found on Paragraphs [0052] and [0057] of US Publication No. 2004/0117394 A1, at least.

Claim 29

The amendment to claim 29 is submitted to clarify the subject matter claimed.

Claim 30

The amendment to claim 30 is submitted to clarify the subject matter claimed.

Claim 31

The amendment to claim 31 is submitted to clarify the subject matter claimed.

Basis for the amendment can be found on Paragraph [0084] of US Publication No. 2004/0117394 A1, at least.

Claim 39

The amendment to claim 39 is submitted to clarify the subject matter claimed.

Basis for the amendment can be found on Paragraph [0084] of US Publication No. 2004/0117394 A1, at least.

Prior Art

In Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that each of claims 1-46 are rejected as being anticipated by US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al).

Novelty of Independent Claims

Independent apparatus claim 1

Claim 1 relates to a communications management apparatus. The apparatus comprises a networked computing means on which is provided: a translation agent with access to usage data of a plurality of communications resources; a database accessible to the translation agent and including data in a system-specific format to assist the translation agent to convert this to a common format; and a processing agent, the translation agent being arranged to consolidate the usage data of said plurality of communications resources by consulting said database and converting system-specific data to data having said common format.

Claim 1 also includes the feature that the processing agent is arranged to infer a duration for a communication event that does not have a recorded duration.

US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) does not disclose the above feature of claim 1.

Thus, it is submitted that claim 1 is novel over US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al).

Independent method claim 25

Claim 25 relates to a method of managing communications by determining costs associated with the use of communications resources. The method comprises the steps of: accessing usage data from a plurality of communications resources; consolidating said usage data from system-specific formats to a common format; costing communication events that have a recorded duration; and inferring costs for communication events that do not have a recorded duration.

Claim 25 also features the step of inferring a duration for communication events that do not have a recorded duration.

US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) does not disclose the above step of claim 25.

Thus, it is submitted that claim 25 is novel over US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al).

Independent apparatus claim 31

Claim 31 relates to a communications management apparatus. The apparatus comprises a networked computing means on which is provided: a translation agent with access to usage data of a plurality of communications resources; a database accessible to the translation agent and including data in a system-specific format to assist the translation agent to convert this to a common format; and a processing agent, wherein said translation agent is arranged to consolidate the usage data of said plurality of communications resources by consulting said database and converting system-specific data to data having said common format.

Claim 31 also includes the feature that the processing agent is arranged to identify unknown addresses present in the usage data but not contained in the database so as to mark unidentified addresses for identification.

US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) does not disclose the above feature of claim 31.

Thus, it is submitted that claim 31 is novel over US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al).

Independent method claim 39

Claim 39 relates to a method of managing communications by determining costs associated with the use of communications resources. The method comprises the steps of: accessing usage data from a plurality of communications resources; consolidating said usage data from system-specific formats to a common format; costing communication events that have a recorded duration; and maintaining a database of communications addresses to identify known addresses.

Claim 39 also features the step of identifying unknown addresses present in the usage data but not contained in the database so as to mark unidentified addresses for identification.

US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) does not disclose the above step of claim 39.

Thus, it is submitted that claim 39 is novel over US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al).

Non-Obviousness of Independent Claims

Present application

As discussed in Paragraph [0002] of the present application, public and private sector organizations are increasingly dependent upon communication media, such as telephone and e-mail, and this means that their staff are spending more time using such communication media. Costs of communication can constitute a significant proportion of the total overhead of an organization, and changes in staff usage of communication resources impacts on organization operation and management.

The present application provides communications management apparatus and methods of managing communications by identifying communication events and determining usage patterns and costs associated with the use of communications resources.

As described on Paragraph [0016] of the present application, this assists an organization in assessing and understanding how different usage patterns of different communication resources and the relative costs attributed to different communication events fits the overall objectives of the organization. Monitoring of different staff communications by different staff facilitates an organization to identify optimal investment, media or changes to business processes and to control communications cost in the organization.

US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al)

As discussed in Paragraphs [0003]-[0005] of US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al), to stay in touch with others, a user may accumulate a number of communications devices, services, and a variety of information resources. Given the many communications devices, services, and information resources a user may accumulate, a user may find it overwhelming to efficiently organize and utilize the devices, services, and information resources.

US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) provides a communication and information resource manager arranged to centralize communications activities and information, and configurable to present personal preferences.

As described in Paragraphs [0037] and [0038] of US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al), this assists the user in handling communications activities by negating the requirement for the user to check or use each type of communications device individually.

Related fields

US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) presents a user with details related to the different communications devices, services, and information resources associated with that particular user, for the benefit of that particular user, to interactively manage user communications.

In contrast, the present application presents an organization with data related to staff usage of different communications resources, for the benefit of the organization, to assist in managing communications and controlling communications cost in the organization.

It is therefore submitted that the present application is related to a different field than US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al).

Independent claims 1 and 25

Independent apparatus claim 1 includes the feature that the processing agent is arranged to infer a duration for a communication event that does not have a recorded duration.

Independent method claim 25 features the steps of inferring a duration for communication events that do not have a recorded duration, and inferring costs for communication events that do not have a recorded duration.

As described in Paragraph [0071], costing of communications events involves a calculation involving a duration. Some types of communication events have recorded duration data, such as telephone call logs, whilst others, such as e-mail and web logs, do not. As described in Paragraph [0057], the processing agent extracts a duration from communications events having a recorded duration and infers a duration for communication events that do not have a recorded duration.

The activity of inferring a duration for a communication event that does not have a recorded duration allows costing of both types of communication event to be performed.

US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) does not teach inferring a duration for a communication event that does not have a recorded duration.

It is considered that US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) does not teach costing communication events. In contrast, Paragraph [0098] of US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) refers to a user as a subscriber to the disclosed communication and information resource manager, and the account information function mentioned in Paragraph [0070] pertains to the user's use of that communication and information resource manager interface.

There is no disclosure in US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) relating to costing communication events.

It is therefore submitted that both independent apparatus claim 1 and independent method claim 25 are non-obvious in light of US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al).

Independent claims 31 and 39

Independent apparatus claim 31 includes the feature that the processing agent is arranged to identify unknown addresses present in the usage data but not contained in the database so as to mark unidentified addresses for identification.

Independent method claim 39 features the steps of costing communication events that have a recorded duration, and identifying unknown addresses present in the usage data but not contained in the database so as to mark unidentified addresses for identification.

As mentioned in Paragraphs [0014] and [0049] the communications management apparatus maintains a database of communications addresses.

As detailed in Paragraph [0084], communications data management involves identifying details associated with communications events with unidentified addresses. In response to identification of unidentified addresses, appropriate individuals are contacted and requested to input details for their unidentified contacts. This procedure serves to prompt individuals to nominate whether an unidentified address is to be recorded and to maintain the database of communications addresses.

As described in Paragraph [0071], the activity of identifying the addresses of communications events allows costing of communication events to be performed.

US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) does not teach identifying unknown addresses present in the usage data but not contained in the database so as to mark unidentified addresses for identification. In contrast, Paragraph [0114] of US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) refers to the disclosed communication and information resource manager as detecting a communication from a person that is not recorded in a database, and automatically using information from the communication to create a record of identification information. Further, as discussed above, there is no disclosure in US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) relating to costing communication events.

It is therefore submitted that both independent apparatus claim 31 and independent method claim 39 are non-obvious in light of US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al).

Novelty and Non-Obviousness of Dependent claims

Dependent claims 2-24 each include the subject matter of independent apparatus claim 1 by reference. Dependent claims 26-30 each include the subject matter of independent method claim 25 by reference.

Dependent claims 32-38 each include the subject matter of independent apparatus claim 31 by reference. Dependent claims 40-46 each include the subject matter of independent method claim 39 by reference.

It is submitted that each of the dependent claims 2-24, 26-30, 32-38 and 40-46 are novel and non-obvious over US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al).

Dependent Claims 2-24 and 26-30

Claims 2-4 and 26-28 relate to the different metrics for inferring a duration for a communication event that does not have a recorded duration disclosed in Paragraphs

[0059]-[0061] respectively. The inferred duration is utilized in costing communication events.

Claims 5 and 29 relate to the retention of staff cost data for conversion of duration into staff costs. Claims 6-9 relate to the retention of staff cost data relating to different aspects of staff costs.

Claim 10 and 30 relate to the retention of transmission cost data for conversion of duration into a transmission cost. Claim 11 relates to the retention of transmission cost data for conversion of size measurements into transmission cost. Claims 12-16 relate to the retention of transmission cost data relating to different aspects of transmission costs.

Claim 17 relates to the retention of infrastructure cost data for conversion of duration into a infrastructure cost. Claim 11 relates to the retention of infrastructure cost data for conversion of size measurements into infrastructure cost. Claims 12-16 relate to the retention of infrastructure cost data relating to different aspects of infrastructure costs.

Thus, each of dependent claims 2-24 and 26-30 relate to aspects of inferring a duration for a communication event that does not have a recorded duration, in connection with calculating costs associated with the use of communications resources.

US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) does disclose metrics for inferring a duration for a communication event that does not have a recorded duration or the retention of cost data relating to staff costs, transmission costs or infrastructure costs, and hence does not disclose the utilization of these features in connection with calculating costs associated with the use of communications resources.

Dependent Claims 32-38 and 40-46

Claims 32 and 40 relate to a message being sent in response to the detection of an unknown address a number of times above a pre-set threshold. Claims 33 and 41 relate to the threshold being defined number of occurrences within a pre-set interval.

Claims 34 and 42 relate to the message being sent to an address local to the networked computing means and associated with the communications event in which the unknown address was detected. Claims 35 and 43 relate to the local address being included in the communications event. Claims 36 and 44 relate to the local address being correlated with the local address included in the communications event but associated with a different communications channel.

Claims 37 and 45 relate to the message being sent via email. Claims 38 and 46 relate to the email message including a link to a web page adapted to accept identifying information for the unknown address and to update the database accordingly.

Thus, each of dependent claims 32-38 and 40-46 relate to aspects of marking an unidentified addresses for identification, in connection with maintaining the database of communications addresses and calculating costs associated with the use of communications resources.

Claims 33-38 and 41-46 include the subject matter of claims 32 and 40 respectively.

US Publication No. 2003/0065779 (Malik et al) does not disclose a message being sent in response to the detection of an unknown address a number of times above a pre-set threshold, and hence does not teach this feature in connection with maintaining the database of communications addresses and calculating costs associated with the use of communications resources.

Regarding Paragraph 4 of the Office Action

As identified by the Examiner, US Publication No. 2002/138427 is incorrectly cited in the information disclosure statement dated 13 February 2006. As further indicated by the Examiner, the correct citation is US Publication No. 2002/0138427.

Regarding Paragraph 5 of the Office Action

A replacement abstract is enclosed that does not exceed 150 words.

Regarding Paragraph 6 of the Office Action

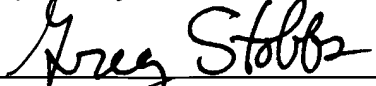
Claim 30 is amended to remove the wording that is identified by the Examiner as rendering the claim indefinite.

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 08-0750, under Order No. 9637-000077/US from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: September 6, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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